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Coweta County

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New Coweta County Library inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright

by Patricia Palmer

Coweta County is the 61st fastest-growing county in the United States and the 12th fastest-growing in Georgia. To meet the needs of its growing population, the Coweta County Board of Commissioners submitted, and citizens approved, a Special Purpose Local Options Sales Tax in 2001 to fund improvements in county library services. The construction of a new library on the county's growing east side was primary in their plan and represents the first library built in Coweta County in 20 years. This library is the

central library in the newly established Coweta County library system.

"The vision has always been to create a library that facilitates, in many ways, vibrant, energetic and interactive learning," said Barbara Osborne-Harris, Coweta County Library director. "Our philosophy is that the customer should be engaged, and focusing on that engagement is one of the most

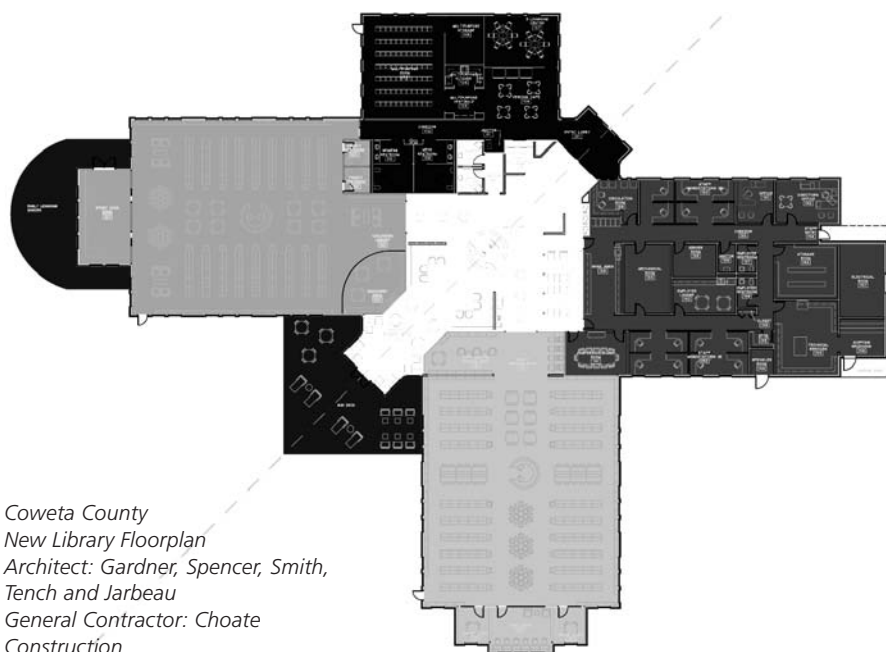
important things we can do to ensure we offer quality library services."

Spotlight On CONSTRUCTION

The project architect, Kathleen Curry, referred to Frank Lloyd Wright's designs

for architectural inspiration. The low hipped roofs with wide overhangs give the illusion that the building is hugging the landscape. The building is only one story, but the hierarchy of spaces uses verticality for areas to stay low to the ground while others reach for the sky. The play with roof heights gave the opportunity to bring in natural light from all levels. The exterior is various shades of browns, respecting the meadow's own natural colors. The primary and secondary axes of the building also pulled from Wright's design. Utilizing major and minor axes for the library assisted in dividing regions of the building and also helped in creating the building's flow. The interior finishes complement the natural landscape.

The interior design of the library has six specified service points. First, the library entrance houses a lobby and multiple-use spaces including: a meeting room, the e-learning center for technology and media instruction



Coweta County
New Library Floorplan
Architect: Gardner, Spencer, Smith,
Tench and Jarbeau
General Contractor: Choate
Construction

and the café. Second, the library's interior entrance is designed to draw the library customer to a centrally positioned circular customer service desk. Specific features include a retail merchandised area of recently released titles, express Internet stations, self-check-out machines and soft seating with side tables.

The third and fourth areas consist of separate children and adult wings. The children's wing includes formal and informal collection arrangements, technology for school age and preschool children, a discovery area for science and creative arts, a story room for storytelling and other literature programs, a parenting collection and formal and informal seating in soft chairs for children and adults accompanied by children. The adult services area accommodates the service needs of the conventional, contemporary and new library customer. Space design includes dedicated rooms for quiet and small group study and computers for public use. There is a separate teen leisure reading area with soft cushioned seating and popular books and magazines to promote teen use of the library. The sixth area includes two dynamic outdoor elements, a reading sun deck for adult, teen and family use and an early learning garden for children and their families.

"It all had to fit together," said Osborne-Harris. "The construction and the layout of the library were the absolute critical first steps to ensuring that our library and the people who work here could ultimately achieve the goals we set."

The end result is a good balance for Coweta County — traditional meets contemporary. "We're excited," said Osborne-Harris. "We think something different is happening here." ►►



Patrons will be greeted by employees in a sun-filled atrium as they enter the new Coweta County Library. (Photos courtesy Choate Construction)



Aerial views show the front and back of the new Coweta County Library. (Photos courtesy Aerial Innovations of Georgia Inc.)